



ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Nascantur in Admirazione

"Let Them Be Born in Wonder."

St. Thomas K-10 School Summer Newsletter July 17th, 2023

School Mission Statement

St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School exists to form disciples of Jesus Christ. Educating in the Eucharistic culture and classical intellectual tradition of the Catholic Church, students are led to encounters with the transcendental good, true, and beautiful. In wonder, confidence, and virtue, students are prepared to engage our broken world for the glory of God, the good of others, and for their own sanctification.



~ Upcoming Events ~

August 7th

School office re-opens

August 14th

Teachers back for in-service

August 16th

Teachers and Staff Active Shooter Training

August 18th

Year kick-off all-school picnic at Southeast Area Park (4-7 p.m.)

August 22nd

First day of school - half day, 11:40 dismissal

August 23rd

First All-School Mass

August 24th

Special School Altar Boy Training, 3:20-5:00 p.m. (see below)

September 1st-4th

No school - Labor Day weekend

(Tentatively) September 7th

Back-to-school night for parents in the parish hall, 6:30-8:00 p.m.



From the Headmaster

I hope this letter finds you in the midst of a restful and fun summer. I have been taking time off here and there, enjoying time with my family and for some good reflection, reading, and conversation.

While I work on interviewing possible candidates to replace Mrs. Herrmann, I am excited to work with our new teachers and to see them becoming integrated with the existing staff. Last month, we had a truly blessed and fruitful time with St. Mary's in Williamston at our professional development retreat in DeWitt. Both returning and new teachers for St. Thomas joined with the St. Mary's staff for prayer, conversation, and talks. It was a wonderful time for developing ties with a "sister" classical Catholic school and for thinking deeply about classical pedagogy.

As we approach the new school year, please know that my family and I will be **offering a Divine Mercy Chaplet every Friday for God's mercy to be upon our school year, and I invite all school families do the same, beginning this week and ending on August 18th**. All our endeavors are dependent on His help and inspiration. Please know also that you and your children are in my prayers, both now and throughout the school year.

What's New for Next School Year

Daily Schedule - New Dismissal Time

In the interest of shortening the school day, the instructional schedule has been adjusted **so that dismissal will now be at 3:15 p.m. instead of 3:25 p.m.** To make this possible, afternoon class times for the 6th-10th graders will be 45 instead of 50 minutes. In the mornings, doors will open and the tardy bell will ring at the same times (7:45 a.m. and 7:55 a.m., respectively).

FACTS Update

As FACTS continues to build out our system, we are making sure to have everything ready to go live for parents in August. At that point, we will provide you with tutorials and other supports to help you navigate the new aspects of the system. Each family will have a “portal” from which they will be able to access everything – tuition, payments, forms, grades, calendar, etc. I do ask your patience as we adjust and transition to the new system, a process that will inevitably come with some bumps along the way.

Middle-School Households

I am excited to announce the formation of boys’ and girls’ households for the 6th-8th graders. Boys and girls from these grades will be split up for P.E. When the girls have P.E. class, the boys will have household time, and vice versa. Mr. Mileski and Mr. Votel (our new middle-school Math and Nature Studies teacher) will lead the boys, and Mrs. Jackowski (our new middle/upper Math and Nature Studies teacher) and Miss Schoenle (our new 5th-grade teacher) will lead the girls. These households will give the middle schoolers a setting to receive teaching on relevant social, spiritual, and moral topics, to pray together, to work and play together, to build friendship, etc. As the school year begins, we will be sending out more details as to how these times will be used and run.

Kindergarten-5th grade will remain in Angel Houses. These will continue to provide them the opportunity to compete for points and be rewarded. I will be working with Mr. McCoy and the teachers to meaningfully link households and/or students across grades as the school continues to grow.

Weekly Extraordinary Form School Mass

All-School Masses will continue to be offered Tuesday-Friday at 8 a.m. In consultation with Fr. Bill, I have decided to have one all-school Mass per week be an Extraordinary Form Mass, also known as the Traditional Latin Mass, to be offered every Friday at the normal time (8 a.m.). This will help the school to better reflect the character of the parish and give students the opportunity to experience it as part of their school routine, just as it has become part of the parish’s “routine.” Students will also experience the way liturgy throughout most of the West was offered when the Church was forming and uniting Catholic cultures in Europe and in mission territories around the world. In keeping with Pope Benedict XVI’s vision, it is hoped that this experience will enrich their participation at the Ordinary Form as well.

Friday’s Mass will be a “simple sung Mass,” with the Proper and Ordinary chants sung by a schola, which will initially be composed of the 9th and 10th graders. Instead of being part of the grade-school choir, the upper-school students will have a separate schola class, in which they will learn about the history and nature of sacred music and become familiar with the chants for the Friday Mass.

This new arrangement for Friday Masses will not begin immediately. I will spend the first few weeks of school orienting the students about the Extraordinary Form and making sure enough altar servers are trained for the Mass. When I have an exact start date – likely in September –, I will let you know. **To that end, Joe Lipa, a member of the schola at St. Thomas and organizer for the Latin Mass community in Ann Arbor, has offered to train any interested 3rd-10th grade boy to serve at school Extraordinary Form Masses. This training will be held on August 24th from 3:20-5:00 in the church.**

Upper (High) School Updates

The 9th and 10th graders will once again be working with Mrs. Nelson each Friday on an icon – this year, the angel Gabriel. Based on what they were able to create this past school year, I very much look forward to seeing their finished work next spring! During the late fall and winter, they will continue to work in garment-making with Mrs. Widawski to serve priests. The stoles they made this past year were impressive works in service to the sacrament of confession.

Their work in icons and garment-making is part of their “immersive missions,” which allow them to pursue together some real and meaningful good or service. This common work allows them to see the ideas of the Catholic tradition incarnated and to understand themselves in relation to a broader whole. Mr. McCoy will be sending out further details about the upcoming year to upper-school parents.

In addition to these missions, we also want upper-school students to physically compete and train together as part of the upper-school curriculum. In lieu of having a viable curriculum sports option at present, the 9th and 10th graders will have physical training and games with Mr. McCoy every Tuesday and Thursday during 7th period in the 1st and 4th terms of the school year. During the 2nd and 3rd terms at that time, they will have art with Mrs. Mangan. We are still exploring sports options for the upper school – both those that could be part of the curriculum and those that are extracurricular possibilities. This is something that we anticipate being worked out as the upper school grows in the coming years.

Flynn O’Hara Uniforms

The updated dress code is attached again for your reference. You can access school dress-code items at flynnohara.com. Our school code is MI103. Most items can be purchased elsewhere as well, as in the past.